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# **HCS and TxHmL Webinar**

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**Topic: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

# Today's Webinar

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This webinar is an informational webinar to provide updates on HHSC guidance for COVID-19 (coronavirus) to the following:

- HCS providers
- TxHmL Providers
- LIDDA Service Coordinators
- Other interested HCS and TxHmL stakeholders





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# Changing Information

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**This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.**

# Communications

Communication	Date
Provider Letter 20-21	March 20 <sup>th</sup>
Provider Letter 20-22	March 21 <sup>st</sup>
Resources to Request PPE	March 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Provider Alert: COVID-19 Notifications	April 1 <sup>st</sup>
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>



# Provider Information

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- Available on HHSC website at:  
<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-provider-information>
- Can filter News and Alerts by Provider Type
- All communications also on Provider Portals



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# Provider Information

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- Available on Medicaid and CHIP Website:  
<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip>
- Information about HHS programs during and after this public health threat



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# PL 20-21 Suspension of Regulatory Requirements

TAC	Description
9.153(37)(b) <i>Definition of a 4-person residence</i>	Allows for an additional individual to temporarily reside in a 4-bed residence
9.174(a)(28) <i>Related to day habilitation</i>	Allows for flexibility in the service provision of day habilitation
9.174(a)(38)(C) <i>Related to daily shift change in RSS residence</i>	Allows flexibility in the requirement of at least one complete shift change of service providers in a 24-hour period



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# Additional Regulatory Waivers

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WSC is awaiting approval for additional waivers of regulatory requirements related to:

- Annual certification surveys
- Follow-up surveys
- Residential surveys
- Extension of certification period



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# Provider Letter 20-22

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- Screening procedures for visitors
- Infection control guidance
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Social distancing
- Resources for program providers

**NOTE: PL 20-22 replaces PL 20-12**



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# PL 20-22 Screening Visitors

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- All residences should have visible signage at the entrances to address the screening criteria prior to allowing access to individuals.
- Signage should include language to discourage visits, such as recommending visitors defer their visit for another time or to list exceptions such as essential personnel.
- The signage should remain in place until further guidance is issued by HHSC.



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# PL 20-22 Screening Visitors

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- All visitors must be screened and can be denied entry if they have:
  - Fever (follow current CDC guidance)
  - Symptoms of respiratory infection (cough, sore throat or shortness of breath)
  - Contact within the last 14 days with another person who
    - Has a confirmed COVID-19 positive test
    - Is under investigation for COVID-19
    - Is ill with a respiratory illness
  - Traveled within 14 days to an area with sustained community transmission



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# PL 20-22 Screening Visitors

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- Program providers are responsible for ensuring that individuals' living in Own Home/Family Home environments are aware of screening criteria before allowing staff to enter to provide critical services.
- CFC PAS/HAB attendants must monitor themselves for symptoms prior to entering an individuals' home.



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# PL 20-22 Infection Control

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- Actively and consistently monitor individuals for potential symptoms of respiratory infection.
- The nurse must be notified immediately of any individuals who begin exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
  - Nurses must notify the individual's physician immediately.
- Ensure that all host homes, three-person, and four-person residences are equipped with soap, hand sanitizer, and any other disinfecting agents to maintain a healthful environment.



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# PL 20-22 Infection Control

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- Limit physical contact, such as handshaking, hugging, etc.
- Reinforce strong hygiene practices for individuals and staff, such as proper handwashing, covering of coughs and sneezes, and the use of hand sanitizer
- Practicing social distancing as defined by CDC.
- Using gloves when supporting individuals
- Regularly disinfecting all high-touch surfaces, such as counters, doorknobs, telephones, etc.



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# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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- Program providers must have PPE available.
- If they are unable to obtain PPE, they will not be cited for not having certain supplies if they cannot obtain them for reasons outside of their control.
  - Providers must document attempts to acquire PPE.
- Follow national guidelines for optimizing current supply or identify the next best option to care for the individuals.
- Resources on HHS website for obtaining PPE



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# PL 20-22 Social Distancing

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- HHSC has not prohibited the delivery of any specific HCS Program service
- Follow all local public health, state and federal directives regarding social distancing and stay-at-home orders.
  - Stay up to date as guidelines can change.
- Critical services must be continued to maintain individuals' health and safety.



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# COVID-19 Notifications

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- A provider must report every confirmed case of COVID-19 in staff and individuals receiving services from the provider.
- HCS and TxHmL program providers must report by e-mailing:  
[WaiverSurvey.Certification@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:WaiverSurvey.Certification@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- HCS and TxHmL providers do not need to use TULIP for self-reporting.



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# Confirmed COVID-19 Notifications to WSC

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- Provider Name
- Component Code
- Contract Number
- Point of Contact Name and Contact Information
- Individuals (please specify the information below)
  - Name and CARE ID of Individuals
  - Number at Home
  - Number in Hospital
- Number of Staff



# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Released through GovD alert with link to document
- FAQ will be updated routinely to answer additional questions and provide clarification to providers



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# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Communal dining
- Ability to leave and return to their residences
- Signage
- Emergency personnel
- PAS/HAB attendant screening
- Non-essential services
- Day habilitation
- Staffing
- Individuals employment
- COVID-19 and PPE resources



# HHSC Letter Requesting a Store Waiver for Product Purchase Limits

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An HCS program provider operating a three or four-person residence may request a letter from HHSC requesting that a store waive product purchase limits for food items implemented because of the COVID-19 crisis.



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# HHSC Letter Requesting a Store Waiver for Product Purchase Limits

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Send letter requests to the HCS Policy inbox at [HCSPolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:HCSPolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us).

- Include:
  - HCS program provider name
  - Number of the contract the program provider has with HHSC
  - Address of the three-person or four-person residence
  - Location code of the residence
  - Program provider tax ID.



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# **Extensions of Eligibility and Individual Plan of Care Revisions for Individuals in HCS and TxHmL Due to COVID-19**

## **Information Letter 20-11**

- To ensure individuals do not experience a gap in services due to the temporary suspension of face to face service coordination visits for COVID-19, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission will extend Intellectual Disability/Related Condition (ID/RC) assessments and individual plans of care (IPC) expiring through the end of April 2020 for individuals who are enrolled in the Home and Community-based Services Program (HCS) or the Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Program.



# **Extensions of Eligibility and Individual Plan of Care Revisions for Individuals in HCS and TxHmL Due to COVID-19**

## **Information Letter 20-11**

- In addition, for an IPC being revised during March or April 2020, HHSC is not requiring a service coordinator or program provider to conduct a face-to-face visit or obtain signatures on the IPC before the revision is effective.
- If an individual's ID/RC assessment or IPC expires in March or April 2020, HHSC will automatically renew the ID/RC assessment or IPC for one year from the expiration date in the Client Assignment and Registration data system (CARE).



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# Information for Program Providers on COVID-19

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## Information Letter 20-09:

- To reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus (COVID-19) to individuals in the HCS and TxHmL programs and provide access to needed day habilitation services, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is temporarily waiving requirements in Sections 4320 and 3710 of the HCS Billing Guidelines and the TxHmL Billing Guidelines.



# **Temporary Change in HCS and TxHmL Policy for Service Providers of Respite and CFC PAS/HAB**

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- HHSC is lifting the prohibition on service providers of respite and CFC PAS/HAB from living in the same home as the person receiving Home and Community-based Services and Texas Home Living program services.
  - This policy change is effective March 27 through April 30, 2020.
- Program providers must complete the required background checks for all service providers.
  - They must comply with the Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 1, Subchapter D and N, HCS and TxHmL Rules, §9.177 (n) and (o), §9.579 (r) and (s), and HCS and TxHmL Billing Guidelines Section 3400 regarding service provider qualifications



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# Electronic Signatures on Forms

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## TAC §49.305 (j)(2) (A, B, C, D)

- Allows for the use of electronic signatures on required HHSC forms.

Information Letter 15-32:

Requirements Regarding Electronic Records  
Maintained by HCS and TxHmL Program Providers

<https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/communications/2015/letters/IL2015-32.pdf>

Set-up and Manage Your Signature

<https://helpx.adobe.com/sign/using/create-electronic-signature.html>



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# Resources

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## Websites dedicated to information about COVID 19

- **DSHS:**

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

- **HHS:**

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19>

- **CDC:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



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# Resources

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## Websites dedicated to information about COVID 19

- **HCS Resource Page:**

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/home-community-based-services-hcs>

- **TxHmL Resource Page:**

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/texas-home-living-txhtml>



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- **Center for Disease Control**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- **COVID-19 Consideration for Individuals with Disabilities:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpL5MIbJndQ>



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## Policy Mailboxes

- **HCS** [hcspolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:hcspolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- **TxHmL** [txhmlpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:txhmlpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- **CLASS** [classpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:classpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- **DBMD** [dbmdpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:dbmdpolicy@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- **CDS** [CDS@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CDS@hhsc.state.tx.us)



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# Thank you

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